

**HABS No. AZ-145-C**

Phoenix Indian School, Memorial Hall (Assembly Hall)  
Northeast Corner of Central Avenue and Indian School Rd.  
Phoenix  
Maricopa County  
Arizona

HABS  
ARIZ.  
7-PHEN,  
17C-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

HABS  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL, MEMORIAL HALL (Assembly Hall)

HABS NO.: AZ-145-C

Location: Northeast Corner of Central Avenue and Indian School Road  
Phoenix  
Maricopa County  
Arizona

USGS Phoenix 1952/Sunnyslope 1965 Quadrangles  
War Memorial UTM Coordinates: 12. 400710. 3706720

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service,  
P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: None.

Statement of Significance: Memorial Hall was the second major building on the site to employ Mission Revival style, and like the first example, the Dining Hall, it was carried out in red brick. It was also sited, parallel and to the east of the Dining Hall, to face south on the axis of a main entrance to the site (Rhoads Circle), as the Dining Hall faced south down Scattergood, the two buildings forming a matching pair at the center of the site. In fact, together with the War Memorial in front of it, Memorial Hall became in 1922 the new centerpiece of the School. An additional and quite unusual feature of the Memorial Hall was the large number --literally, thousands -- of names and dates carved or scratched into the bricks of the exterior walls, recording the presence at the School of generations of students. Although most of the inscriptions (grafitti) were typically abbreviated, enough information could probably be gleaned to form an impression in miniature of the social history of the School over seven decades.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION.

A. Physical History.

1. Date of Erection: 1922.
2. Architect/Builder: Architect not known, but probably designed in the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.; builder not known.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S. Department of the Interior.
4. Alterations and Additions: Alterations to the building as designed took place primarily at the time of original construction, as discussed below; only minor modifications occurred later, such as removal of the lamp standards from the front steps, replacement of the fire escape slides by stairs, and installation of a dropped ceiling in the main space. A small extension was added on the north face, behind the stage, but otherwise the building was in 1990 quite close to the condition of 1922.

B. Historical Context.

The Memorial Hall was designed in 1921 and construction was begun in February, 1922 and finished in the middle of the same year (Pierson, p. 86). It was intended to be the replacement for the original Auditorium, converted in 1904 to the Dining Hall. Where School assemblies were held between 1904 and 1922 was not clear, although the Dining Hall could have served that purpose. In any case the School had reached a population of c. 750 by 1920, and new functions had appeared to which the Dining Hall could not respond. The School had always had instruction in music (Band and Chorus), and theatrical activities were not unknown; in addition, moving pictures had become familiar entertainment; the Dining Hall was not equipped to provide for any of those activities. General assemblies and graduation ceremonies also needed a proper site. The new auditorium, named Memorial Hall in remembrance of students who had served in the U.S armed forces during the First World War, was designed to meet those needs. It had a seating capacity of c. 1100. In the last decade of its existence, as the population of the School declined significantly, theatrical functions may have become less common; the below stage space was used for a student clubhouse, and part of the space became dead storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement.

The Memorial Hall is a rectangular block, the main axis running north-south, with a twin-towered facade to the south; the towers are identical in detail and flank a scrolled gable end. Behind the principal facade there is a vestibule giving access to a two-storied hall behind; at either end of the vestibule a stair rises to a balcony level above. At the north end there is a stage with wings to either side, raised above a half basement. The north face has a scrolled gable like that on the south.

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1. Architectural Character. The Memorial Hall is in a general way in the Mission Revival style. The south face is closest to the Mission Revival pattern, its composition of towers and gable repeating a familiar formula. In fact, the earlier Dining Hall clearly had an influence on the later building, as a comparison of the design of the south face in each case makes clear. Again, the use of redbrick for the exterior of the Memorial Hall must have been intended to reflect the character of the earlier structure, as plain red brick was not a common finish for Mission Revival buildings. However the side elevations of the Memorial Hall have no Mission style details at all; when viewed from the east or the west the style of the building is closer to the contemporary late Classical Revival, widely used for institutional buildings at the time, and well represented in the school buildings of the city of Phoenix dating from the same period.

2. Condition of fabric. Good, with signs of wear at some points.

B. Description.

Exterior.

The Memorial Hall is a rectangular block, 104'6" north-south x 72'4" east-west, with a tower at the southeast corner projecting 2' to the east and south, and a tower at the southwest corner projecting equal distances to the south and west.

On the south (principal) face, in the center, at ground level, a concrete staircase 30'4" wide with 7 risers to a platform 6' deep, leading to 3 pairs of double doors that gave access to the entrance vestibule. The double doors were flanked by pilasters of brick and covered with round arches, the doors themselves being also roundheaded. Directly above the entrance doors, illuminating the vestibule, a row of 3 windows, each consisting of 3 units, each unit wood framed, double hung, 1 over 1; to the left and right of the row of windows another window at the same level, each window of 2 units, all as before. At the second story level, in the center, a row of 5 roundheaded windows rising from a corbelled string course, separated by piers with the spring line of the row of arches marked by corbels; all windows wood framed, double hung, 1 over 1; to the left and right of the row of windows another window at the same level, all as before. Terminating the south face a low slope Mission style gable, with semi-elliptical crown joined by 1 step to an inverted cyma recta profile left and right, continued to the junction with the east and west towers with 2 steps and a horizontal line, the gable topped with a cast concrete coping; within the gable frame a rectangular stucco panel with a miniature Mission gable top and date in relief: 1922; below, a horizontal stucco panel with a raised frame all round and the words: MEMORIAL HALL.

On the south face, to the east end, a tower, 15'4" square in plan, with a solid base, above which rose 3 stories topped by an open attic. At first story level, on the south face, a rectangular window in 3 sections, the center panel double hung, 1 over 1, a narrow fixed panel left and right, all wood framed; above, at second story level, a roundheaded window in 3 sections, the center panel double hung, 1 over 1, a narrow fixed panel left and right, 3 segmental fixed panes above, all wood framed; the whole enclosed in a 2 story opening framed with brick pilasters and round arch above, the spandrels below the windows of brick laid with continuous vertical joints. At third story level a group of 3 small

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roundheaded windows, each double hung, 1 over 1, wood framed; the group of 3 enclosed by a frame of arches and pilasters in brick. The third story was terminated by a projecting string course of 3 courses of brick corbelled out, with a cast concrete member projecting above. The fourth story consisted of an open attic with brick walls either side of a wide opening containing a spiked iron railing, the brick walls carrying large wooden Italianate style brackets in pairs which supported a roof of low pitch projecting 5'3" from the wall plane. The fourth story terminated in a brick parapet topped with a cast concrete coping in a miniature Mission gable profile. The east face of the east tower identical in all details to the south face; the north and west faces of the east tower existed only at the fourth story level, where they were identical to the south face. At the west end of the south face of the building, another tower, identical in all details to the east tower, in reverse.

On the west face, to the north of the west tower, a row of 5 windows, 2 stories high, rectangular double casements below, each 10 light, rectangular double casements above, each 6 light, the upper windows surmounted by 6 light semicircular transoms, all wood framed; each window unit framed by pilasters and a round arch in brick, with a brick spandrel between upper and lower windows. At the north end of the row of windows a pair of single doors, one at main floor level, one above it at balcony level; the lower door flat headed, giving access to a short flight of concrete stairs descending to the west; the upper door roundheaded, with a semicircular transom, giving access to a steel platform and slide descending to the north. To the north again, at second floor level a single window, double hung, wood framed; below it, at half basement level, a single door reached by a depressed entry gave access to the below stage space. The east face was identical to the west face in all details, in reverse.

On the north face, there were windows opening to the stage space in 3 ranks, symmetrically disposed about the central axis. In the east half of the north face, at the second floor level, to the east end, 2 rectangular windows, with a smaller rectangular window to the west; at the stage level, 2 rectangular windows as above; at the below stage level, a row of 5 smaller rectangular windows; all windows wood framed, double hung, 2 over 2. In the west half of the north face, identical windows, in reverse. At the center of the north face, at stage level, an opening for a pair of wood panelled doors. The north face terminated by a Mission style gable of low slope, with profile as on the south face.

On all 4 faces of the building, extending from a height of about 3' to a height of about 6' above grade, on either side of the main entrance and up the walls at the positions of the east and west exit stairs there are graffiti incised into the brickwork. They record the names, nicknames, and dates of attendance of students at the School, among other things.

#### Interior.

The interior of the Memorial Hall is a single large volume in structural terms, divided by interior walls into 3 parts. At the south end there is a vestibule the full width of the building east-west and 11' deep north-south, with stairs at its southeast and southwest corners rising to the balcony level above (the towers appearing on the exterior not being spatially separate on the interior at the 2 lower levels). The vestibule opens through its north wall to the auditorium proper, the full width of the building east-west and about 67' north-south. On the north wall of the vestibule are two wood-framed, glass-fronted display cases at a height of about 5' above the floor. Above the vestibule is the south balcony, reached by stairs from the vestibule at its east and west ends, its volume included in the volume of the

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main hall at that level; at the rear (south) of the balcony, at the center, is a projection booth, and at the east and west ends stairs give access to the third and fourth stories of the southeast and southwest towers. The balcony is extended in 2 wings, one each along the east and west walls of the auditorium. At the north end of the auditorium is the stage wall, which was flat, with the stage opening at the center, 28' wide, with 2 doors at either side, below the east and west wings of the balcony, giving access to the backstage spaces. To the north, behind the stage wall, is the stage, 47' east-west x 21' north-south, flanked east and west by groups of 3 small spaces, dressing room, toilet and stairway, on two levels. The below stage space was apparently intended for storage.

Construction.

The Memorial Hall was constructed of brick throughout, of a uniform medium red hue, laid in stretcher bond except where used decoratively, the mortar dyed black, with raked joints. Window sills, string courses and the cap at the top of the exterior walls were all of cast concrete. The building rose on concrete foundations, and was designed to have concrete floors throughout, except for the stage floor which was to be timber, and timber was later substituted at some other points, such as the balcony. All windows and doors were of wood, wood framed. The windows were glazed with patterned translucent glass, possibly throughout. The interior wall surfaces were plastered throughout, and the ceiling of the auditorium was of pressed metal. The roof was carried on timber trusses, sheathed above with sheet metal.

Discrepancies.

Even at the earliest stage of its existence, there were discrepancies between the building as designed (1921 Drawings) and as built. On the south face, the row of 5 windows at the second story level was made narrower, and the stucco panel bearing the name was added. The profile of the gable was more complex as shown in the drawings than as built; as built it met the east and west towers at the level of the third story cornice, rather than below it, as drawn. The gable terminating the north face was similarly modified in practice to conform to the south face gable; in addition the parapet at the northeast and northwest corners of the building was raised about 1' above the adjacent parapet for a distance of about 5' in each direction from the corner. In the base of each tower on the south face there was projected a Rest Room (Boys to the east and Girls to the west), reached by stairs both from outside and within the building; there was no sign that the restrooms were built. The internal stair to each restroom was to descend from an outer end of the entrance vestibule, while each stair to the balcony level ascended in a single flight from the center of the vestibule; in the event, the lower stairs were not constructed and the upper stairs were redesigned to rise in one flight to landings at the outer corners of the vestibule space and, turning at 90 degrees, in a second flight to the balcony level.

The vestibule was designed to open to the auditorium beyond through doors only at its ends; doors were installed at the center as well. The floor of the auditorium was to rise in 3 steps for seating along its east and west walls; the steps were not built. The stage wall was designed with its east and west ends raked sharply into the auditorium space, to meet the ends of the curvilinear balcony (see below); the front of the stage extended towards the auditorium in a shallow sinuous curve, and the stage opening was framed by paired Ionic columns with entablature above. When the balcony was redesigned to its final rectilinear form, the stage wall was made flat at either end, although the raked lines can be seen at

foundation level, below the main floor. The stage front maintained its curve in plan, but while the entablature of the columnar frame was put in place, it could not be determined whether or not the columns were installed originally as they are not in place now.

The balcony level was designed as a continuously curving U shape (1921 Drawings), with its north ends curved towards the outer walls to the east and west. At some time before construction was completed the balcony level plan was revised to show a single rectangular balcony at the south end of the auditorium (1922A, 1922B Drawings); in the event, the south end balcony was extended by wings against the east and west walls, forming a U shape as at first, but all rectilinear (1922C Drawings). The roof over the auditorium was designed to be carried on triangular trusses with a pitch of about 22 degrees for the top member; as constructed, the roof was carried on nearly flat trusses with the top chord at a pitch near 10 degrees (1922A Drawings). The balcony level was designed to be executed in reinforced concrete; as built, it was carried out in timber, with hangers from the trusses above (1922A Drawings).

Near the north end of the west wall, at second floor level, there was to have been a single window, roundheaded, 1 over 1; below it, at stage floor level, 2 rectangular windows, each 2 over 2; below again, opening to the below stage space, 2 smaller rectangular windows, each 2 over 2; similar openings would have been found on the north end of the east wall (1921 Drawings); those openings were not constructed as shown.

#### Additions and Alterations.

The Memorial Hall saw only a small number of alterations after its original construction in 1922. On the south face, lamp standards were indicated on the low walls either side of the entrance stair (1921 Drawings); they were replaced by a row of 4 lamps mounted on the south face between the windows above the entrance doors. The entrance doors were shown as roundheaded and panelled (1921 Drawings); a variant solution showed the doors as roundheaded, with vertical boarding (1931 Drawing); the doors finally were rectangular with semicircular transoms above. In addition, the central of the 3 door openings was bricked in at an unknown date.

The fire exits from the balcony level at the north ends of the east and west faces were designed and built as steel slides; they were later replaced by steel stairs. A small extension (12' north-south) was built against the north wall in 1933 or 1934 (Pierson, p.136), increasing the backstage space; it was of plain brickwork, with a single pair of double doors in its north face, giving access to a wood stair descending to the north. On the original north wall, near the east end, 3 rectangular squeeze molds of red-tinted cement, bearing relief designs in wave motifs, were applied at ground level in 1939; they were apparently samples of a planned redecoration of the building which was not carried out (Pierson, p.151). Rest rooms were added at first floor level, within the space of the auditorium, at the southeast and southwest corners. Air-conditioning equipment was installed in the roof space and a dropped ceiling to house new flush light fixtures and air-conditioning registers was installed in the main space of the auditorium at a level about 1'6" below the original pressed metal ceiling, which was left in place. While most of the glazing is translucent, there are a number of clear glazed panels in place, no doubt replacements. A ramp for handicapped access was added against the south face, at the east end, out of brick and concrete.

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Sources.

See Source List in Phoenix Indian School Report, HABS NO.: AZ-145. Drawings located: 1921, 1922A, 1922B, 1922C, 1922D (for the original building); 1931 (for the south doors); no drawings were located for the north extension.

Project Information.

This project was undertaken according to the terms of Subagreement No. 2 to Cooperative Agreement No. CA-8000-9-8005 between United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the Arizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of Arizona State University. This project was carried out prior to transfer of the property from Federal ownership, and the property was documented as part of the 1988 Memorandum of Agreement among the Department of the Interior, Arizona SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Prepared by: Bernard M. Boyle.  
Title: Professor.  
Affiliation: School of Architecture, Arizona State University, Tempe,  
Arizona.  
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MEMORIAL HALL, Sketch Floor Plan

